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Docket No.: 66929-003

Amendment to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A stopper for closing bottles, ~~more particularly wine bottles,~~ at least partially made of synthetic material and having at least a generally cylindrical length ~~to be inserted in shape for insertion into the bottle neck, comprising at least the stopper being formed with~~ a tubular duct adapted to put the residual volume of air present inside the bottle in communication with the outer ambient; a tube secured in the tubular duct, and at least a membrane provided with microholes, said membrane being located in the tube and arranged transversely thereof for allowing the passage of oxygen from the bottle interior to the outer ambient and viceversa.

2. (Original) The stopper according to claim 1 wherein the size of the diameter of said microholes is such as to avoid the passage of liquids.

3. (Previously Presented) The stopper according to claim 1, wherein said microholes of said membrane have a diameter between about 0.01 and about 0.5 microns.

4. (Original) The stopper according to claim 1, wherein said membrane is made of a film of acrylic copolymer anchored to a support of non woven fabric.

5. (Original) The stopper according to claim 1, wherein the membrane is made with a film of fluorinated polymer.

6. (Original) The stopper according to claim 1, wherein the membrane is made with a polyamide film.

7. (Previously Canceled)

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8. (Original) The stopper according to claim 1, wherein the synthetic material by which said stopper is made belongs to the group of polyethylene resins added with an expansion agent.

9. (Previously Presented) A stopper for insertion into the neck of a liquid containing bottle having a residual volume of gaseous atmosphere in the interior of the bottle above the liquid comprising:

a body having opposite ends and a generally cylindrical shape, and a tubular through duct extending between the ends;

a tube secured in the duct; and

a membrane secured transversely across the tube for allowing communication between the interior and exterior of the bottle, said membrane being secured in the tube and having microholes therethrough for allowing the passage of gaseous atmosphere from the interior of the bottle to the exterior of the bottle, and to selectively block the passage of liquid therethrough.

10. (Previously Canceled)

11. (Currently Amended) The stopper according to 9, where in the body is formed of a synthetic material comprising at least one of a film of acrylic copolymer anchored to a support of a non woven fabric and; a polyethylene resins resin mixed with an expansion agent; and the membrane comprises a film anchored to the support including at least one of an acrylic co-polymer, a polyamide film; and a fluorinated polymer.

12. (Previously Presented) A stopper for closing bottles comprising:

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a cylindrical body having a tubular duct, a tube in the tubular duct and a membrane having microholes and arranged transversely to and fixed within said tube, said holes being sized for selectively allowing the passage of oxygen while inhibiting passage of liquid therethrough.

13. (Original) The stopper according to claim 12, wherein said microholes have a diameter between about 0.01 and about 0.5 microns.

14. (Original) The stopper according to claim 12, wherein said membrane is formed of at least one of a film of acrylic copolymer; a film of fluorinated polymer; a polyamide film.

15. (Previously Presented) The stopper according to claim 12, wherein the membrane includes a peripheral support of non-woven fabric.

16. (Previously Canceled)

17. (Original) The stopper according to claim 1, wherein the stopper is formed of a polyethylene resin and an expansion agent.

18. (Previously Presented) A stopper for wine bottles comprising:
a cylindrical body formed of a polymeric material having end portions and a cylindrical duct extending from the end portions axially of the body along a central axis thereof;

a tube secured within the body between the end portions having a central opening aligned and in communication with the duct;

a membrane formed with microholes of a selected dimension being located within the tube transversely to said tubular duct for allowing passage of oxygen between the bottle interior and ambient in amounts compatible with the contents of the wine bottle.

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19. (Currently Amended) A stopper for closing wine bottles, comprising:

a body formed of synthetic material having a generally cylindrical shape and ends, the body being formed with a tubular duct having a diameter and extending between ends of the body along a central axis of the body, said duct;

a tube located in the tubular duct having a cylindrical opening aligned with the axis of the body and a diameter corresponding to the diameter of the duct; the tube having an outer diameter larger than the diameter of the duct; and

a membrane having microholes, said membrane being located in the tube and disposed transversely thereof for allowing the passage of gas between the interior of the bottle interior and ambient.

20. (Withdrawn) A method for making a stopper for closing wine bottles, comprising the steps of:

forming a body of synthetic material with a generally cylindrical shape and ends, and forming a tubular duct in the body and extending between ends of the body along a central axis of the body, said duct;

securing a cylindrical tube having a central opening in the tubular duct;

aligning the opening in the tube with the axis of the body; and locating a membrane having microholes in the tube and disposing the membrane transversely thereof for allowing the passage of gas between the interior of the bottle interior and ambient.

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21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20 further comprising
forming the duct with an inner diameter, and
forming the tube with an outer diameter larger than the inner
diameter of the duct.

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